WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An electronic commerce system for generating, updating, and managing multi-taxonomy environments, the system comprising:

one or more databases operable to store product data for one or more products;

a master global content directory including a plurality of product classes organized in a hierarchy, each product class categorizing a plurality of products and associated with one or more attributes of the products categorized in the product class, at least one of the product classes having one or more associated product pointers that identify one or more of the databases;

one or more secondary content directories including one or more product classes, each product class being mapped to one or more product classes in the master global content directory and having one or more associated class pointers that identify the one or more product classes in the master global content directory to which the product class is mapped; and

a search interface operable to communicate a search query to one or more of the databases to search product data stored in the databases identified by one or more of the product pointers.

2. The system of Claim 1 wherein the secondary content directories are personal to one or more users and are organized in a hierarchy satisfying one or more requirements for the users.

3. The system of Claim 1 wherein a class pointer identifying a product class in the master global content directory also inherently identifies all product classes under the product classes in the hierarchy of the master global content directory.

4. The system of Claim 1 wherein the search interface is further operable to:

receive the selection of a product class of a secondary content directory from a user of the secondary content directory;

receive one or more search parameters for a product from the user;

determine the product classes in the master global content directory identified by the class pointers in the selected product class;

determine the databases identified by product pointers in the determined product classes of the master global content directory; and

communicate a search query having the search parameters to the determined databases.

5. The system of Claim 1 wherein access to the master global content directory is determined by which product classes in the master global content directory are identified by class pointers associated with the product classes in a secondary content directory.

6. The system of Claim 1, wherein one or more of the product pointers identify particular product data in one or more of the databases.

7. The system of Claim 1, wherein the search query comprises desired values, specified by the user of one of the secondary content directories, for one or more of the product attributes associated with a selected product class.

8. A method for generating, updating, and managing multi-taxonomy environments in an electronic commerce transaction, the method comprising:

storing product data for one or more products in one or more databases;

categorizing the products in a master global content directory, the master global content directory comprising a directory structure including a plurality of product classes organized in a hierarchy, each product class categorizing a plurality of products and associated with one or more attributes of the products categorized in the product class, one or more of the product classes having one or more associated product pointers that identify one or more of the databases;

providing a plurality of users access to the master global content directory through one or more secondary content directories, the secondary content directories comprising one or more product classes, each product class being mapped to one or more product classes in the master global content directory and having one or more associated class pointers that identify the one or more product classes in the master global content directory to which the product class is mapped;

receiving a selection of a product class from the user, the product class having at least one class pointer identifying at least one product class in the master global content directory; and

in response to the selection of the product class by the user, communicating a search query to one or more databases.

9. The method of Claim 8 further comprising:

receiving the selection of a product class of a secondary content directory from a user of the secondary content directory;

receiving one or more search parameters for a product from the user;

determining the product classes in the master global content directory identified by the class pointers in the selected product class;

determining the databases identified by product pointers in the determined product classes of the master global content directory; and

communicating a search query having the search parameters to the determined databases.

10. The method of Claim 8 wherein the secondary content directories are personal to one or more users and are organized in a hierarchy satisfying one or more requirements for the users.

11. The method of Claim 8 wherein a class pointer identifying a product class in the master global content directory also inherently identifies all product classes under the product classes in the hierarchy of the master global content directory.

12. The method of Claim 8 wherein providing a plurality of users access to the master global content directory through one or more secondary content directories comprises determining access to the master global content directory by which product classes in the master global content directory are identified by class pointers associated with the product classes in a secondary content directory.

13. The method of Claim 8, wherein one or more of the product pointers identify particular product data in one or more of the databases.

14. The method of Claim 8, wherein the search query comprises desired values, specified by the user of one of the secondary content directories, for one or more of the product attributes associated with a selected product class.

15. Software for generating, updating, and managing multi-taxonomy environments in an electronic commerce transaction, the software embodied in a computer-readable medium and operable to:

store product data for one or more products in one or more databases;

categorize the products in a master global content directory, the master global content directory comprising a directory structure including a plurality of product classes organized in a hierarchy, each product class categorizing a plurality of products and associated with one or more attributes of the products categorized in the product class, one or more of the product classes having one or more associated product pointers that identify one or more of the databases;

provide a plurality of users access to the master global content directory through one or more secondary content directories, the secondary content directories comprising one or more product classes, each product class being mapped to one or more product classes in the master global content directory and having one or more associated class pointers that identify the one or more product classes in the master global content directory to which the product class is mapped;

receive a selection of a product class from the user, the product class having at least one class pointer identifying at least one product class in the master global content directory; and

in response to the selection of the product class by the user, communicate a search query to one or more databases.

16. The software of Claim 15 further comprising:

receiving the selection of a product class of a secondary content directory from a user of the secondary content directory;

receiving one or more search parameters for a product from the user;

determining the product classes in the master global content directory identified by the class pointers in the selected product class;

determining the databases identified by product pointers in the determined product classes of the master global content directory; and

communicating a search query having the search parameters to the determined databases.

17. The software of Claim 15 wherein the secondary content directories are personal to one or more users and are organized in a hierarchy satisfying one or more requirements for the users.

18. The software of Claim 15 wherein a class pointer identifying a product class in the master global content directory also inherently identifies all product classes under the product classes in the hierarchy of the master global content directory.

19. The software of Claim 15 wherein providing a plurality of users access to the master global content directory through one or more secondary content directories comprises determining access to the master global content directory by which product classes in the master global content directory are identified by class pointers associated with the product classes in a secondary content directory.

20. The software of Claim 15, wherein one or more of the product pointers identify particular product data in one or more of the databases.

21. The software of Claim 15, wherein the search query comprises desired values, specified by the user of one of the secondary content directories, for one or more of the product attributes associated with a selected product class.

22. A system for generating, updating, and managing multi-taxonomy environments in an electronic commerce transaction, the method comprising:

means for storing product data for one or more products;

means for categorizing the products in a master global content directory, the master global content directory comprising a directory structure including a plurality of product classes organized in a hierarchy, each product class categorizing a plurality of products and associated with one or more attributes of the products categorized in the product class, one or more of the product classes having one or more associated product pointers that identify one or more of the databases;

means for providing a plurality of users access to the master global content directory through one or more secondary content directories, the secondary content directories comprising one or more product classes, each product class being mapped to one or more product classes in the master global content directory and having one or more associated class pointers that identify the one or more product classes in the master global content directory to which the product class is mapped;

means for receiving a selection of a product class from the user, the product class having at least one class pointer identifying at least one product class in the master global content directory; and

in response to the selection of the product class by the user, means for communicating a search query to one or more databases.